WASHINGTON POST
AND TIMES HERALD

MAR 3 0 1964

A New Look at Foreign Policy

By Marquis Childs

LIKE A SPRING THAW in a long-frozen river bed, the rigid lines of American foreign policy have begun to crack.

A great debate on foreign policy has been joined and it will go right through the November election. Sen. J. William Fulbright's historic speech was the opening salute.

But much of what the chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee had to say has long been the private view of many Senate colleagues and of policy-shapers in the executive branch just below the top level. Fulbright was voicing a long-felt dissatisfaction with what has seemed to be the frozen posture of the United States.

In these rigid attitudes—like the children's game of "playing statue"—Washington has been reacting to the actions of others, so the criticism has gone. We have failed to take the initiatives that are part of the responsibility of a position of supreme power in the world.

Already the epithets "appeaser," "Munich," "warmonger" are being heard. They will resound with ever greater vehemence and emotion as the Presidential campaign begins. With rising prosperity, domestic issues are bound to take second place to foreign policy, and that is especially true at a time when the Communist bloc as well as the West is being subjected to stresses and strain.

IN 1939 THE ISSUE of lend-lease to Britain and France engaged in a death struggle with Nazi Germany precipitated an historic debate. The isolationists led by Sen. William E. Borah of Idaho made their last stand on that issue and lost. From the moment of that historic vote, the United States was committed to a role of responsibility—all measures short of war to aid the Allies—until the Japanese attack at Pearl Harbor made it an all-out commitment.

The present could be another such time of reckoning with "peaceful coexistence" as the challenge. Fulbright was saying that reality dictates a revision of long-frozen policies and a realization in the Government and in the country that the United States can no longer impose its will everywhere. He was attacking the "myths" of total victory, a Communist monolith presenting West, an inflexible and never-changing China. These were some of the "unthinkable thoughts" that Fulbright put into words.

At the other extreme stands Sen. Barry Goldwater, one of the two principal avowed candidates for the Republican presidential nomination. His book, "Why Not Victory," is the view of those who reject any kind of coexistence. More recently Goldwater has said that if he were President he would practice brinksmanship at every opportunity in confronting the Soviet bloc with unremitting force. He advocated breaking relations with Moscow but later put qualifiers on this demand.

Between Fulbright and Goldwater, who in the past have several times tangled on the Senate floor, is a wide gray zone of views ringing changes on the two positions. While not rejecting efforts to improve peaceful relations with the Communist bloc, many insist on the need to mass American military power on all peripheries in order to face down every Communist challenge. They would also keep up foreign aid and every other means to try to insure freedom for those nations threatened by communism either from within or without.

IN THE OPPOSING views as the debate begins is a curious meeting ground. The Goldwaterites on the whole oppose foreign aid. They would place reliance on military strength. And if the United States does not have its way—for example, if Red China is admitted to the United Nations—they would pull out. This has overtones of isolation and the Fortress America concept of 1939.

But some who favor a neutral solution for Southeast Asia now oppose foreign aid. Senators such as Ernest Gruening of Alaska and Wayne Morse of Oregon say America is throwing good money after bad in the aid program. What these critics on the left of center are saying also at times sounds like the old isolationism.

The real definition for the Administration and for the Democratic Party must come from the President. He has thus far made only glancing and generalized remarks on foreign policy. A major foreign policy speech is in order.